

# EDINBURGH CHAMBERS' JOURNAL

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No. 175.

SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 1835.

PRICE THREE HALFPENCE.

## THE LEATHERN PURSE,

A SECOND TALE OF THE TABLE D'HÔTE.

THE singular story of the Lost Spoon told by the Englishman at the Parisian table d'hôte, and which was narrated a few weeks ago in the Journal, did not fail to excite considerable interest among the handful of strangers gathered together under such agreeable circumstances as those already mentioned. The story, I observed, was listened to with particular attention by a brother Scotsman, a young gentleman belonging to the flourishing town of Greenock on the Clyde, or its neighbourhood, and who, it appeared, was now in Paris in reference to some commercial speculations.

"Gentlemen," said he, "the tale we have heard is certainly one of the most extraordinary of its kind, and I would say is almost too romantic for belief; but it should be recollected that incidents frequently occur in real life much more wonderful and improbable in their nature than those which could be safely imagined by the writers of fiction. Of the truth of this remark, I am myself, in one sense, a living evidence, being the son of an individual whose whole success in life was owing to an accident, or rather series of accidents, in connection with a lost purse. Had this purse never been lost, or never been found, I would not now have been in existence, or ever enjoyed the pleasure of your company."

"Indeed!" one or two of us replied; "that seems to have been a wonderful purse you speak of; pray let us hear all about it—that is to say, if the story be not too long, for the sun will now be shining beautifully on the gardens of the Thuilleries, and it is almost time to adjourn to hear the music of the military bands playing by the Fountain of Apollo." "Oh, as for that, gentlemen," answered our open-hearted acquaintance, "the story, if it can be called such, is exceedingly short, and will soon be told. It shall not detain you above half an hour; and you know, at the end of that time, it will be quite soon enough to enter the gardens. The music will not commence for at least an hour." This explanation being assented to, after a few more observations, the Scottish gentleman proceeded as follows:—

In the year 1783, a young man of the name of Sinclair, from the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire, went to the West Indies to push his fortune, or rather perhaps to mend his fortunes; for previously to his taking this step, he had failed in a small business which he had attempted to establish in his native village. His failure, however, it is but right to state, was owing to no misconduct of his own, but to a too easy disposition, and a nature too kind and gentle to enable him to contend successfully with a grasping world. Thinking every one as honest as himself, he trusted where he ought not to have trusted, and only found his error when he found himself ruined. To add to his sorrows on this occasion, his wife—for, young as he was, he was already married—died about the same time, after giving birth to their first and only child, a daughter.

Placing the motherless infant, in whom all his affections were now centered, in the hands of a relation, who kindly undertook the charge of it, Sinclair sailed for the West Indies, inspired with the hope—and it was this hope alone that induced him to go in quest of fortune in a foreign land—that he might yet be able, as he himself expressed it, to make a lady of his little Mary.

On reaching Jamaica, Sinclair found employment as a clerk in the counting-house of a storekeeper in Kingston. His salary at first was small, but was gradually increased as his integrity of character, steady habits, and general utility, became appreciated by his

employer; and there seemed little doubt, if he lived, that he would in time realise all his most sanguine hopes of worldly success. But in the midst of these hopes and prospects, poor Sinclair was attacked with the fever of the country, and for some weeks his life was despaired of. His youth, however, and a naturally strong constitution, together with his extremely temperate habits, enabled him to struggle through. He escaped with life, but his health was irretrievably ruined, or at least so grievously impaired that he was told his existence could be prolonged only by his returning immediately to breathe the air of his native land.

This was a dreadful disappointment to poor Sinclair. In a few short weeks all his bright prospects were annihilated; and after all he had undergone, and all he had hoped for his little Mary, he was about to return to her as poor as he had left her; for out of his scanty means he had punctually remitted every year an ample maintenance for her, reserving little more indeed than was necessary to procure a bare subsistence for himself. The thought of returning penniless to his native land, and therefore not in a condition to do that justice to his child—for this idea was ever uppermost in his mind—which he had fondly hoped should one day have been in his power, was distraction to him; and under the feeling of desperation which it excited, he determined, whatever might be the consequence, to struggle on where he was for a few years longer, should he be spared, and to endeavour to accumulate some small matter from his salary by a system of the most rigid economy, since he must now abandon all hopes of larger sources ever being opened up to him; and to this humble attempt he was encouraged by the circumstance of there having been a handsome addition made to his salary just about the time of his illness. In pursuance of this resolution, poor Sinclair continued in his situation, though without any improvement taking place in his health, for five years longer, when he arrived at such a state of debility as entirely unfitted him to continue in his situation; and he now therefore determined on returning to his native land.

Previously to his embarking in the ship that was to carry him home, Sinclair put the hard-earned savings which he had accumulated, and which amounted to three hundred guineas, all in gold, into a leathern purse; and this, for greater security, he deposited about his person. He constantly wore it there during the whole voyage, allowing his luggage to take its chance with that of others, but the purse he never for a moment lost sight of; for, small comparatively as was the amount of the treasure it contained, it was yet all that he had to look to in the world, and on it he had raised some happy visions of future comfort and prosperity in his native country, calculating that it might be the means of setting him up in some small business, from which he might derive a subsistence for himself and his Mary.

After a pleasant voyage, the ship in which Sinclair was embarked arrived safely in the Clyde, which was her destination, and came to anchor on the well-known anchorage-ground below Greenock, called the Tail of the Bank. The passengers being naturally eager to land, a boat was instantly brought alongside, and one after another they descended into her. The last of them was Sinclair. In place, however, of descending in sailor fashion, with his face to the ship, he stepped down the reverse way; and thus a hook which was accidentally in the way caught one of the tails of his coat, and suddenly turned the pocket mouth downwards. In this pocket was poor Sinclair's whole treasure. There he had deposited the leathern purse,

which contained his all, just before leaving the ship, and down it went between the boat and the ship in some ten or fifteen fathoms water, and was lost to its unfortunate owner for ever. I will not attempt to describe poor Sinclair's feelings on this singularly distressing occasion, nor the sympathy which it excited in all who beheld the untoward accident. Sinclair himself said little or nothing, and in solemn silence the boat was rowed to the shore. The former, who was a total stranger in that part of the country, betook himself on landing to one of the inns in the town, and shortly after retired to bed. From that bed the poor heart-broken man never again rose. The dreadful blow which his cruel fortune had inflicted on him, in thus depriving him of all his worldly wealth at the very moment when he was about to apply it to the purpose for which he had toiled, at the daily risk of his life, to acquire, was too much for his already broken-down and enfeebled frame. On the very night on which he landed, he was attacked with a violent fever, which in less than forty-eight hours terminated his existence, and released his crushed and broken spirit from its scarcely less crushed and broken tenement of clay. No one knew to what place or kindred the poor victim of misfortune belonged, nor even what was his name; and he was buried in the grave of the stranger. Enough, however, was found about him to defray all the charges he had incurred while living, and to inter him decently when dead.

Many years after this, and when the melancholy story of the gentleman who had died in the inn had been long forgotten, or but remembered by a very few, as a young man was sauntering one Sunday morning early on the sea-shore between Greenock and Gourock, during a very low ebb of the tide, he observed something protruding through sand which was all smooth around. It attracted his attention. He endeavoured to start it from its bed with the toe of his shoe; but being a soft substance, it yielded too much to be thus disengaged. It was leather. The young man's curiosity was excited. He stooped down and seized it with his hand, and with a pretty forcible jerk extricated it from the clay or sand in which it was firmly embedded. He raised it up. It was a leathern bag, and remarkably heavy for its size. It was filled with coin. It was, in short, the identical purse which Sinclair had lost many years before. The weight of the gold had carried the lower part of the bag deep into the sand, but the upper part, above the string which secured the gold, had continued projecting above the surface, and it was this that had attracted the notice of the fortunate finder. This person, whose name was Melville, hurried home with his treasure in an ecstasy of joy, and related the circumstance to his father, who was a common ship-carpenter, and a very poor, but well known as a remarkably well-principled man. On seeing the purse, and being told where it had been found, he instantly recollected the melancholy story of Sinclair, and did not doubt, strange as the circumstance was, that it was the very purse which that unfortunate person had lost. Satisfied of this, he resolved that it should not be touched until every means had been tried to discover the natural heirs of its late owner. No means, however, were open to him of accomplishing this but that of advertising in the newspapers, which was accordingly done to a large extent; for the honest man could not think of appropriating a single sixpence of money so acquired while there was the slightest chance of discovering a lawful owner; and in order to increase this chance, every particular known regarding the purse and its loser, together with all the melancholy cir-

circumstances attending it, were carefully and minutely detailed in the advertisements. This was all that could be done. For the space of nearly two years these advertisements were repeated at intervals, but as no name could be given, nor any particular part of the country alluded to as being or likely to be the residence of the parties interested, no discovery took place, and old Melville was at length persuaded, though still not without some reluctance, to allow his son to avail himself of his good fortune, by appropriating the contents of the purse. But even then the old man resolved, in as far as he could exercise any control over its disposal by virtue of his parental authority, that the money should be so employed that a reasonable chance should always exist of his son's being able to restore the amount to the rightful owner, should such at any time appear to claim it; for he never could be brought to view it in any other light than as merely borrowed money, which its present possessor was bound to repay whenever it should be demanded, without any limitation as to time.

In accordance with these sentiments, he recommended his son to employ the money in setting himself up in some small safe business, in which, with ordinary prudence and attention, he might be pretty sure of making a livelihood, without much risk of dilapidating his capital. Fortunately, the son inherited all the integrity of character of his father, and, therefore, perfectly coincided with him in all his views regarding the application of the found money; and after mature deliberation, it was resolved by both that the young man should commence the business of a ship-chandler, to which the latter had been bred, on a scale proportioned to their means. A shop was accordingly taken and stocked, and year after year saw the latter gradually enlarging through the industry, prudence, and steadiness of its owner, who, at the expiry of about ten years from his first beginning business, began to be looked upon as one of the most substantial and thriving traders in town. He had, in short, by that time amassed a very handsome sum.

Acting on the excellent principles of his father, which were also his own, Mr Melville had, several years previously to this time, laid aside at interest the three hundred guineas which had been the foundation of his fortunes, that, if its lawful owner should ever appear, he might be ready at a moment's notice to restore it, not only not deteriorated, but improved to the fullest extent which it would admit of, consistently with its perfect safety; and this sum, which he had laid aside the moment he could dispense with it in his business, he had resolved never again to touch under any circumstances.

About this period Mr Melville had occasion to go to London on some important business, which having settled, he again stepped into the mail coach for Scotland, and was not a little pleased to find a very beautiful and modest young lady one of his fellow-passengers. The singularly pleasing manners, good sense, and uncommon personal charms of this lady, soon led Mr Melville to associate something more than an ordinary interest with the chance which had brought them together. In short, he quickly found himself very deeply in love with his fair travelling companion; and before they had reached the end of their journey, which was in those days a tedious one, he had fairly proposed marriage, and was accepted, both parties trusting to the favourable conclusions which they had come to regarding each other; in which, though certainly an imprudent and dangerous experiment, neither was deceived.

As the intimacy of the betrothed pair increased, their conversation of course gradually became more familiar; and it was when this improvement had taken place in their acquaintanceship, that Mr Melville said laughingly to his fair companion, when they were within a few miles of the place of their destination, and at the same time interrupting her in something she was saying relative to it—

"But it strikes me, Miss Sinclair, that there is something regarding this journey of yours that you have not fully explained to me. Pray, what is it? Come, now, do tell me."

The lady coloured a little and smiled.

"Why, Mr Melville," she said, after a pause of a few moments, "your conjecture is perfectly right. There is something connected with this journey of mine which I have not explained to you, and that because it is so foolish and absurd that I am really ashamed to mention it. But if you promise not to laugh at me, nor to consider me altogether an idiot, I will tell it you."

The promises were of course readily obtained.

"Well, then," continued the lady, "to confess a truth, my principal object in coming down to Scotland is to look for a lost purse!" and she expected a burst of laughter in return for her intelligence from her companion; but, to her great surprise, in place of indulging in any expression of mirth on the occasion, he looked extremely grave.

"Indeed!" he said, seriously; "and pray what are the particulars regarding this lost purse?"

"The particulars," replied his fair companion, "are few, but they are not without interest." And she went on to say, that, many years ago, her father, in disembarking from a ship in which he had arrived at Greenock from the West Indies, where he had accumulated a little money, had dropped the purse which contained all his store into the sea, and that she had

been lately informed that it had been afterwards found, and advertised. That some friends, relations of her mother, with whom she was staying in London, who had heard of the advertisement alluded to, advised her, nay insisted on her, repairing to the spot in person, to see, late as it was, whether or not she could discover any trace of the finder, or recover any part of the lost property. "But," she added, laughing, "I am afraid it is a wild-goose chase, and that there is little chance of my succeeding in either at this distance of time. However, I could not resist the importunity of my friends in the matter, and have therefore come thus far on my errand, rather to satisfy them than from any other motive."

If Mr Melville looked grave before, he looked ten times more so now, and not a little amazed and agitated to boot. He, however, contented himself with saying, after a pause of two or three minutes' duration, in which he had somewhat recovered himself, that perhaps her journey might not be so fruitless in respect to the purse as she feared. "There was no saying," he said, "what chance might throw up; leave the seeking of the purse to me; I will make all the necessary investigations; and, at all events, I trust you will have no cause to rue your journey to Scotland."

Two or three days after the arrival of the parties at their journey's end, Mr Melville was married to Miss Mary Sinclair; for the lady was indeed no other than the daughter of the unfortunate loser of the leathern purse, and subsequently the wife of its finder.

On the day of their marriage, Mr Melville, who still carefully concealed the circumstance from his intended, took from his pocket a leathern purse, heavy with coin, the identical one which he had found, and which he had ever since carefully kept as a curiosity, and presenting it to his lady with an air of good-humoured mock gallantry, told her he had much pleasure in restoring to her what she had come in quest of; remarking at the same time, that she had found both a purse and a husband in the same day. Mr Melville then, in more serious mood, proceeded to inform his astonished bride that he was the finder of her father's purse, and that it had been the foundation of his fortunes. He then laughingly bade her count the contents, which, he said, he believed she would find right, principal and interest. I need carry the story no further; Mr and Mrs Melville lived happily together for many years; and their children, of whom I am the eldest, found themselves born to tolerable competencies; and thus, by a strange combination of accidents, poor Sinclair's "little Mary" reaped after all the benefit, in a way and to a much greater extent than he could ever have dreamt of, of his little hoard, rendered nothing the worse for the adventure it had undergone.

#### LAWS OF MENTAL EXERCISE;

BEING SECOND SEQUEL TO THE ARTICLE "USE AND HAVE."

IN the article entitled "Use and Have," the advantages of a moderate exercise of the mental faculties, and the disadvantages of their too slight or too great exercise, have been explained physiologically, and shown to rest on the same grounds as the exercise of the corporeal functions. In entering upon a few more general observations respecting the laws of mental exercise, we must assume that the faculties are independent of each other, and that each is not only capable of being exercised singly, but, by its exercise, benefits no other besides itself. To cultivate the power by which we become skilled in numeration, the numbers must be shown in real objects. To exercise the power by which we become well-informed as to the situations of places, it is not enough to know the names of each town, river, sea, &c.: that would be chiefly an exercise to the power of observing and recollecting the forms of words: we must acquire a knowledge of the actual relative situations of the places. Let any one study the principles of optics merely in books and in descriptions, let him learn by heart all the theories of colours; but let him never see any colour, nor feel their harmony: he may, like a blind man, recollect all the expressions used in painting, but, without practical instruction, that primitive mental power which takes particular cognisance of colour will not improve.

For want of a knowledge of these laws of the mind, education has hitherto done less than it ought to have done for the improvement of the human race. Young people have been most skillfully tutored in the names of things, without being made acquainted with their nature. They have been taught to spell the words benevolence, temperance, and conscientiousness, without being trained to act under the influence of those virtues. The greater part of ordinary schooling is indeed addressed to only a few of the faculties, and these not the highest or most important; and thus the better part of the human being is apt to lie completely waste. In the part that is dormant,

we generally find the whole of the Feelings, except perhaps those inferior ones which in general but too little need aid of exercise, and which it should rather be a part of the business of education to keep in check. At the best, we find endeavours made to cultivate the feelings through the medium of the understanding. Intellectual education is thought all in all: only enlighten and inform the mind, and virtue will follow. No delusion could be more complete. No one is benevolent, just, timid, courageous, haughty, or affectionate, in proportion to his understanding; nor has he penetration by virtue of his feelings. It is by exercising those particular faculties that man increases his courage, his justice, his benevolence, and his cupidity; as, by practice, he learns to sing, to calculate, to measure, to speak, and to reflect. Bring men into favourable situations, calculated to call forth their feelings, and these will be strengthened. Place them in what is called bad company, and their inferior dispositions will in like manner gain force. Far be it from us, who deal so much in precept, to undervalue its efficacy; yet it is easy to see that precept has no such power as example, while example, in its turn, is infinitely surpassed by the great principle of EXERCISE.

Ignorance of the fundamental powers of the mind, and of the means of exercising them, may be observed in all the institutions of society. Whole universities are conducted according to erroneous suppositions. All teachers agree that the reasoning power ought to be exercised in every individual; but what shall be done to accomplish that end? Perhaps we see one man of great depth of mind who is eminent as a mathematician: the inference is immediately drawn, that every child ought to study mathematics in order to acquire great reflecting powers, and not even the theologian is to be excepted, as if mathematical and moral reasoning were founded on the same principles.

Another person also endowed with great reasoning powers is perhaps a great philologist, and particularly an excellent Greek and Latin scholar: therefore, every one is compelled to learn Latin and Greek, with the view of giving him a powerful mind, as if learning words and phrases were the same as acquiring sensations and perceptions of all kinds, and reasoning on them. Happily the time of sophistry is past, and positive knowledge is now esteemed. Experience shows that philology and mathematics do not improve arts and sciences, nor the moral character of man.

The next principle of exercise is, that the primitive powers are not to be confounded with their application; each power being always the same, but its applications and modifications infinite, according to age and external circumstances. Inattention to this difference produces more bad effects than many persons suppose. They complain, for instance, of the vanity of adult persons, while they continue to nourish this feeling in every child they meet with. He who knows that the love of approbation is a fundamental feeling, that it exists in different degrees of strength in different individuals, and that exercise increases its activity, will not excite it too much in infancy, for fear that in later life it should produce abuses. He will perceive that flattery of every kind excites this sentiment; that praising a child for his figure, his hair, his voice, his clothes, his manner of dancing, &c. will put into action, and increase his love of approbation, and prepare for him a source of misfortune. Irascible children should not be permitted, and still less encouraged, to beat their playthings, against which they hurt themselves. As equity was a principal object of the Areopagus of Athens, that virtue was considered as indispensable in the members in all situations. He who killed a bird that looked for shelter in his house could not become a member; and a member who played on a word was degraded, because such a practice might do harm to truth. How inferior, nay puerile, is the behaviour of some modern legislators! Those who are faithful in little things, says Christ, will be so in great. Thus particular vigilance ought at all times to be observed not to cultivate to excess the propensities and sentiments of children, which may in after life render them unhappy or impede their moral conduct. On the other hand, they are wrong who neglect to cultivate the feeling of veneration, or the faculties of the fine arts, because disorders may and often do result from them. This also happens with acquisitiveness, and with every fundamental power, each of which, however, is given to a certain purpose. In admitting that every one is answerable for the talents he has received, it is evidently our duty to cultivate the fine arts, as far as they are in harmony with all other faculties. Superstition undoubtedly degrades a reasonable being, but the human character is ennobled and the charms of society increased by respectfulness. There can be no doubt that in attending to the difference between primitive powers and their application, between their legitimate actions and misapplications or disorders, many errors hitherto committed in education will be avoided.

The third principle of exercise is, that the order of instruction ought to follow the order of nature in bringing the faculties into activity. Children acquire notions before they make themselves acquainted with signs to indicate them. They know the objects themselves sooner than their qualities and mutual relations; they know the qualities of those objects sooner than



the modes of their actions. Accordingly, their language begins with nouns, and verbs in the infinitive mood. By degrees they learn signs to indicate their acquired notions of other kinds. Their language, then, evidently shows that their faculties do not appear simultaneously. It is indeed an important point in education to know that the faculties of the mind begin to act successively, viz. in proportion as the organs on which their manifestations depend, are developed. Hence they ought to be exercised in the same order; and the knowledge of the periods of development of the respective organs is as necessary as a knowledge of the functions of the primitive faculties; because it is certain that no faculty can be exercised without the assistance of its organ. This principle is general in organic and animal life.

It may be here considered that education, as far as exercise goes, begins earlier in life than is commonly believed. The vegetative functions, the hours of sleep and of appetite, may be soon regulated. Children are easily accustomed not to fall asleep, except when carried on the arms or shaken in a cradle. They begin to make acquaintance with the external world when a few weeks old. It is by degrees that they taste and feel, hear and see; that they learn to distinguish their nurse, or those who take care of them, from strangers, and the existence of external objects. When they become attentive to the things around them, we ought to show them repeatedly a great number of various objects, and exercise as much as possible their external senses. They are soon tired with the same object, but pleased with new impressions, as is the case also with the greater number of adult persons. Thus it is not a matter of indifference whether a child be carried quietly on the arm, or whether its attention be excited towards external objects. It is very important in those society young children are kept, not that children absolutely acquire the character and talents of those who are around them, but because their society will be favourable or unfavourable to the exercise of the innate dispositions.

The periods when the innate powers appear, increase, decrease, or disappear, are of great importance. Some are active early in life, and continue longer than others which appear later. The powers will be cultivated with most effect at the period of their natural activity.

There is some regularity in the appearance and disappearance of the faculties, yet there are many exceptions and modifications, as in all natural operations. Nature is immutable only with respect to the relation of cause and effect; but she modifies the phenomena in infinite varieties. It happens usually that those powers that act strongly, appear early and last long. The intellectual faculties, and several feelings, commonly decrease in old age. Several persons, however, are particularly fortunate in preserving the energy of their mind to a great age. But the greater number of old people are deceived if they take themselves to be still what they were when young.

Let it not be forgotten, that, from the earliest age, the feelings, as well as the intellectual faculties, may be educated, and that young children show no less difference in their characters than in their talents. They are patient or obstinate, indolent or lively, timid or courageous, attached to or careless about others, &c. Let those powers which are naturally too active be quieted, and their activity prevented; while those that do not act with energy enough, ought to be excited in a practical manner.

The fourth principle of exercise is, that it must be proportionate to the innate dispositions. Too much activity weakens or even exhausts the faculties, both feelings and intellect. This explains why too early geniuses often become ordinary men when grown up; why the mental operations, when too active, are frequently deranged; and why it is necessary to keep up the balance between body and mind, and between the individual faculties.

The brains of delicate children ought to be exercised late, and the greater their mental activity is, the less it needs to be exercised.

It is also very important to know, that, during the climacteric years, when the body increases most rapidly, the mental powers are weaker. Hence at that period the body deserves greater care than the mind. The mental faculties will resume their activity when the body has acquired its solidity.

Increased or diminished energy is dependent not only on the periods of growth, but all powers are liable to be occasionally more or less fatigued. No power is always equally active, each requires rest. It is therefore advisable to exercise one power after another. As any faculty, if too much excited, is injured, or even exhausted, so it is weakened if it remain too long inactive.

Teachers may easily perceive the disadvantages of too long a cessation from study in the effects of vacation on their pupils. These latter always find some difficulty in returning to application and order. Intermission is necessary as well as exercise, but neither ought to be of too long a duration. They are relative, and education requires to be amended in this respect. A long vacation is more favourable to the teachers than to the students. The former, it is true, want rest, but they might alternate, for the same reason as the objects to be taught must be changed from time to time. Education should never be tedious, nor too long interrupted; different faculties should be put successively into action, which produces a kind of relaxa-

tion, and sufficient care ought always to be taken that the bodily constitution does not suffer by pressing too keenly the progress of mental instruction.

Children who return for months to their family are rather spoiled, during that time, than improved in order and obedience. They are indulged in their caprices, and see conduct practised in direct opposition to what they are taught at school to regard as meritorious. The frequent and long interruptions of practising the theoretical rules, prevent them from becoming altogether accustomed to them, and they wish for nothing more earnestly than that the time of learning might be over, to be permitted to act in opposition to what they have been taught, and to forget the ideas they have had so much difficulty in acquiring.

The fifth principle of exercise is, that its influence will not be the same on every individual, on account of the innate dispositions. Even different children of the same parents, and brought up by the same teachers, turn out quite differently. It is more easy to cultivate the lower feelings, since they are naturally stronger in mankind; but those who are virtuous by nature will sooner learn to practise moral principles than those in whom the lower propensities predominate. Those who have little justice will with great difficulty learn to be just in a higher degree, in the same way as those who possess any intellectual faculty in a small degree, will never excel in it. The greater the disposition, the greater the effect of exercise; yet it is always true that a proper degree of exercise strengthens the functions of each power.\*

#### MONSIEUR DE LA TUDE.

Of the numerous tales related of the incarceration of real or pretended criminals in the Bastille and other state prisons of France during the principal part of last century, none are so remarkable or so affecting, none so much calculated to rouse feelings of indignation in the bosom of the philanthropist, as that told by Monsieur de la Tude, in the published memoirs of his life. It appears that this gentleman, while no more than twenty-three years of age, and when residing and pursuing his studies in Paris, fell under the displeasure of Madame de Pompadour, a potent court favourite during the reign of Louis XV., and by her orders, enforced probably through the medium of a *lettre de cachet*, was seized, and without form of trial or accusation committed to the Bastille. This event took place on the 1st of May 1749; and from that date commences the history of the sufferings and attempts to escape of this unfortunate and enterprising individual, whose memoirs are only paralleled by those of the equally unhappy Baron Trenck.

From the 1st of May till the beginning of September, de la Tude remained confined in the Bastille, when he was removed, for some unexplained reason, to the castle of Vincennes. He had not been long in this gloomy fortress till he put in execution a project for accomplishing his escape. Being indulged by the lieutenant-governor with the privilege of walking two hours a-day in the garden of the castle, he bethought himself of taking advantage of this circumstance for his purpose. Two turnkeys usually attended him, one of whom waited in the garden, and the other conducted him down stairs from his room. Having formed his project, he for several days together descended a little faster than the turnkey, who, as he always found him by the side of his companion in the garden, took no notice of this manoeuvre. Observing this, and taking a favourable opportunity, he tripped as fast as possible down the flight of steps, and shutting the bottom door of the staircase, advanced boldly to the garden-gate, where a sentinel was posted by way of security.

The vigilance of this man, as well as that of several others who were placed on the opposite side of the drawbridge, he eluded, by pretending to inquire for a person who had just gone that way; but after having obtained his liberty in this artful manner, he was imprudent enough, through the advice of a friend, to surrender himself up again to the king, trusting that the artless confidence of an innocent man would not be abused. He was, nevertheless, reconducted to the Bastille, where he was closely confined for eighteen months in one of the most dismal dungeons of that prison. At the expiration of that term he was taken from this horrid situation, and put into another room, with a prisoner named D'Alégre, who was likewise detained by Madame de Pompadour.

Both he and his companion had been long taught to expect with patience the disgrace of the marchioness; but with the unfortunate, days are as tedious as years, and it is no wonder that they should turn their thoughts towards regaining their liberty. This, however, appeared a romantic idea; for besides the high walls of the Bastille, which were six feet thick, and four iron grates at each window, the prison was continually guarded by a number of sentinels, and the trenches which surrounded it were most commonly full of water: how then could two prisoners, confined in

a narrow cell, and destitute of all human assistance, effect their escape?

M. de la Tude, who was fruitful in expedients, first informed himself, by means of an artful trick which he played while they were conducted back to the room after hearing mass, that the apartment in which they were confined had a double ceiling; and after mentioning what he had observed to his friend, told him that he had formed a plan for their enlargement, which could not fail of success. From his confidence upon this occasion, D'Alégre thought him disordered in his mind, and asked him, with a sneer, where they were to get the ropes and other implements necessary to such an undertaking.

"As for the ropes," said de la Tude, "give yourself no manner of trouble: in that trunk there are twelve dozen of shirts, six dozen pair of silk stockings, twelve dozen pair of under-stockings, five dozen drawers, and as many dozen of napkins; now, by unravelling these, we shall have more than enough to make one thousand feet of rope." "True," said the other, "but how shall we remove the iron bars from the window? for without instruments it is impossible to do any thing." De la Tude told him that the hand was the instrument of all instruments, and that men, whose heads are capable of working, are never at a loss for resources; what, though neither scissors, knives, nor any edged tools, are allowed us, have not we the iron hinges of our folding table, which, with patience and skill, we can make answer the same purpose?

From this discourse D'Alégre began to entertain some hopes, and they now employed all their time and talents in the execution of this curious project. The first evening, by means of one of the hinges, they took up a tile from the floor, and after digging for six hours, found it was a double partition, as de la Tude had conjectured. They then carefully replaced the tile, and began to unravel some of the shirts, drawing them out thread by thread, and twisting them together, till they had formed a rope fifty-five feet long; this they made into a ladder, consisting of twenty-five rounds, made of the wood which was brought them for firing.

The next thing to be done was to remove the iron bars from the chimney, by which outlet they had resolved to escape; they accomplished it in about two months, and then returned them to their places, leaving them ready to be removed when they should be wanted. This appears to have been an exceedingly troublesome operation, as they never descended from the work without bloody hands, and their bodies were so bruised in the chimney, that they could not renew their labour for an hour or two afterwards. This toil over, they now set about making a wooden ladder of twenty feet long, which, as fast as it was finished, was hid with the other things between the two floors.

As the officers and turnkeys often entered the apartment in the day-time, without any previous notice, they were obliged not only to secrete their tools, but the smallest chips and rubbish that were made, the least appearance of which would have betrayed them. To answer this purpose the more effectually, they gave each of them a private name, and when any body was coming in, he who was next the door gave the cant term to the other, that he might conceal them as expeditiously as possible. When their ropes were all ready, their measure was four hundred feet; they had still to make two hundred steps for their ladders, which, when accomplished, they covered with the lining of their bed-gowns and under-waistcoats, to prevent their rustling against the walls as they descended.

These preparations cost them eighteen months' work, night and day, and they now waited for a dark stormy night to favour their escape. At length, after a great number of difficulties, and many narrow escapes from being detected by the officers, the happy moment they had been so long expecting arrived, and de la Tude was the first to mount the chimney. Here he was almost smothered with the soot, and the blood streamed from his hands, elbows, and knees, down to his legs. After some time, however, he got to the top, and by means of a string drew up his companion, and all their implements, to the top of the building, from which they lowered their baggage, by fastening a rope to the chimney; and in this way they descended both at once on the platform, serving as a counterpoise to each other.

Here they fastened their rope-ladder to a piece of cannon, and let themselves and their baggage down into the trench, an operation which was attended with the utmost difficulty: far out of a thousand spectators who should have seen them by daylight, vibrating backwards and forwards in the air, not one of them, says M. de la Tude, but would have given us over for lost. They arrived, however, at length, safely in the trench, and felicitated themselves upon the success of this part of their enterprise, having been extremely apprehensive of detection; as the sentinel was all the time walking on the corridor, at not more than thirty feet distance.

From this place they proceeded to the wall which parted the trench of the Bastille from that of St Anthony's Gate, where there was a ditch six feet wide, and deep enough to wet them to the armpits. When they had crossed this, they had yet to work their way through the stone wall of the governor's garden, which was more than four feet thick: and all the time they were employed in this business, the major's round passed them with a great lantern every half hour, at

\* For the greater part of this article we are indebted to Spurzheim's *View of the Elementary Principles of Education*, London, 1828.

about ten or twelve feet over their heads; during which times they were always obliged to retreat into the ditch, and to stand up to their chins in water, in order to avoid being seen.

Before midnight, by means of the iron bars which had been taken out of the chimney, they had displaced two or three wheelbarrows of stones, and in a few hours more a breach was made in the wall, sufficiently large for them to get through it. They were now in the trench of St Anthony's Gate, and thought themselves entirely out of danger, when they both suddenly fell into an aqueduct, with at least six feet of water over their heads. In this dangerous situation de la Tude caught hold of the bank, and plunging his arm into the water, drew his companion to him by the hair of his head, and thus happily escaped the danger which threatened them.

"Here," says M. de la Tude, "ended the horrors of that dreadful night; and here we embraced each other, and fell upon our knees to thank God for the great mercy he had bestowed upon us, in thus restoring us to liberty." They now mounted the slope of the ditch as it struck four o'clock, and after calling upon a friend who was not at home, flew for refuge to the abbey of St Germain-des-prés.

Soon after this almost miraculous escape, they both set out, by different routes, for Brussels, agreeing to meet at the same inn; but when de la Tude, who had to encounter with a number of perils on his journey, arrived at the place appointed, he found that his friend had been discovered, and conducted back to prison. Shocked at this intelligence, he set out immediately for Amsterdam, where he had not long been before he was demanded of the states by the French ambassador, in the name of the king, and carried back to his old quarters in the Bastille, fettered hands and feet, and only allowed a bed of straw, without covering, to repose on.

In this wretched situation he remained forty months, and during this confinement was one day indulged with the barbarous privilege of being permitted to see his friend D'Aligre, whom he found raving mad in the hospital for lunatics at Charenton. The poor creature had no remembrance of him, and made him no other answer, when he reminded him of their escape from the Bastille, than by telling him that he was God.

Some time after this shocking interview, in the year 1764, and when he had been fifteen years in confinement, he observed from the tower of the Bastille a large piece of paper at the window of a chamber in St Anthony's Street, on which was written these words, "Yesterday died the Marchioness of Pompadour." This had been placed there by some young ladies, who were acquainted with his story, and he was now persuaded that he should be released from his confinement; but M. de Sartine had expressly forbidden all the officers of the Bastille to inform the prisoners of her decease. When de la Tude, therefore, wrote to him, entreating his deliverance, he came to the prison, and insisted upon knowing his author.

His behaviour upon this occasion proving offensive to M. de Sartine, he was removed from prison to the governor's house, loaded with chains from head to foot, and afterwards sent to the castle of Vincennes, to be confined in the black-hole. Here, however, the lieutenant-governor, being a humane man, suffered him to walk two hours a-day in the fosse, guarded by two fusiliers and a serjeant, who stood at the gate with another sentinel. While he was walking here one evening, it happened to be a prodigiously thick fog, which he thought was a circumstance by no means to be neglected: he therefore struck down the two sentinels with his elbows, and pushing boldly by the others, flew as fast as his legs would carry him. A great cry of stop thief ensued, in which he joined, and by that means made his escape to Paris.

Although the author of de la Tude's misfortunes was now no more, although her death was little regretted by the king and rejoiced over by the nation, still, strange to say, the persecution of our hero was not remitted. His escape was no sooner made known than a number of spies and setters were sent out upon the search after him, and a thousand crowns were offered as a reward for discovering him. Finding, therefore, that it would be impossible to elude the vigilance of scouts and informers, he wrote a letter to the minister of the war department, acquainting him that he would not fail to be with him on such a day, and begging he would have the goodness to suspend the orders for arresting him till he had been indulged with a moment's audience. Going, according to his promise, to the apartment of the minister, he was immediately secured, without being permitted to utter a syllable, and put into one of the most gloomy dungeons of the castle of Vincennes.

All hope of release now died within the bosom of this victim of a cruel and arbitrary government. He sank into despair. He looked forward to death as the only event calculated to bring a termination of his sufferings. Yet death came not, and a gleam of hope now and then cheered him to sustain the mortal coil. Thus, for an additional period of twenty years did he endure the horrors of confinement in the vaults of Vincennes and the Bicêtre. At length Cardinal de Rohan, a minister of Louis XVI. discovered him at the bottom of a dungeon in the last-mentioned Parisian prison, and being moved with his extreme wretchedness, promised him his liberty, provided he could give proper security for his good behaviour. This last kind office was undertaken by a charitable lady

of the name of Le Gros, who, on being accidentally informed of his misfortunes, resolved to dedicate her whole time and attention towards procuring his enlargement. The difficulties she had to encounter, together with the narrowness of her own circumstances, rendered the accomplishment of this project almost impossible; but, by incessant and persevering diligence, she at last obtained the object of her wishes; and, after having set him free from all restraints, helped to support him by the small earnings of her own and her husband's industry.

His joyful liberation took place in 1784, having altogether been confined for about thirty-five years. He entered prison a gay light-hearted young man of three-and-twenty; and when restored to the world, it was at the mature age of fifty-eight; but the sufferings he had endured had broken his constitution and blighted his prospects, and he now had all the appearance of a man in the extreme of old age and decrepitude. Such is the story of the unfortunate Monsieur de la Tude, which forms another testimony of that terrific species of oppression which has been for ages perpetrated by the continental powers of Europe, and an exemption from which is one of the proudest boasts of this land of liberty and intelligence.

#### BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES.

##### MRS SIDDONS.

MRS SIDDONS, whose extraordinary abilities as a tragedian are now only known by tradition to the younger portion of society, was the daughter of Roger Kemble, the manager of an itinerant company of players, and was born at Brecknock, in South Wales, in 1755. She commenced her theatrical career as a singer, but soon relinquished that line, and attempted tragedy, for which she was eminently fitted, by figure, character of countenance, and natural ability.

It is the aim of tragedy to awaken the deepest sympathy in the minds of the spectators, and arouse those sentiments which have a tendency to counteract the evil passions of our nature. It leads us to admire the nobleness of suffering virtue, to be terrified and admonished by the dreadful workings of remorse, to melt into tears at the scenes of woe created by the hand of villany, and to rejoice alike over the fall of the tyrant and the defeat of the murderer. Whether tragedy accomplishes any lasting and beneficial effects such as are usually ascribed to it, it is not our present purpose to inquire. It is sufficient to state, that the correct portrayal of the action of the passions in its performance on the stage, is held to be the most difficult part of the profession of the actor, and is of extremely rare attainment. The family of Roger Kemble would seem to have been born with this rare gift, and in a higher degree than had previously been developed in this country. Young Miss Kemble soon gave proofs of her skill in tragic acting, but was not suffered by her father to gather the reputation to which she was entitled by her talents. While yet in her fifteenth year, she conceived a passion for a young man, who was an actor-of-all-work in her father's company; and her parents, considering her too young to form a connection with him, discouraged the continuance of her stage performances, and placed her as lady's maid with a lady in Warwickshire. In her eighteenth year, however, she was married to Mr Siddons, with their consent; and the new-married pair entered a strolling company.

For several years Mrs Siddons performed along with her husband at the principal towns in England, including London, gaining both reputation and profit; but as it was only in secondary characters that she was allowed to appear, her extraordinary powers remained latent and unknown. At length her performances gained her considerable favour at Bath, and by the intervention of the Duchess of Devonshire, she was engaged at Drury Lane, which is reckoned a prodigious advance in the theatrical world. The re-appearance of Mrs Siddons in London took place on the 10th of October 1782, in the character of Isabella. Her success was complete. The public were astonished at her powers. She was acknowledged to be the first tragic actress of the English stage, and tragedy became fashionable. The manager gave her an extra benefit, and increased her salary. For that benefit she came forward as Belvidera, and at once exalted her fame, and made a considerable increase to her fortune. Such was the delight which she gave, that the gentlemen of the bar subscribed a hundred guineas as a present to her. It was not only as an actress that Mrs Siddons displayed abilities; she had considerable merit as a sculptor, in which capacity she produced among other works a medallion of herself—a bust of her brother, John Philip Kemble, in the character of Coriolanus—a study of Brutus before the death of Caesar—and a bust of President Adams.

For upwards of twenty years, Mrs Siddons continued to astonish and enchant the lovers of the drama, not only in the metropolis, but in Dublin, Edinburgh, and other cities, in all which places she was received with equal applause. Her peculiar capabilities as a tragic actress, and her first appearance in Edinburgh, are thus feelingly described by the author of "The

Cabinet"—a series of essays recently published, and noticed by us in a previous number:—

"Mrs Siddons was not only the greatest performer in tragedy that has appeared in our time, but (in her own peculiar walk of art) was probably the greatest that ever existed—or, perhaps, ever will exist. The assemblage of qualities, bodily and mental, which are required to constitute a first-rate tragedian, is of the most rare and admirable kind; and these appeared, in this remarkable woman, in such completeness and perfection, as I verily believe never were found united in any other. To a countenance of the utmost beauty, she added a figure of commanding stature, and perfect symmetry. Her movements were majestic: her attitudes at once easy, graceful, and striking: her voice—always musical—had tones of passion which thrilled through the very soul; but, above all, the magic of her eye—the play of her countenance—were such, that she could express every shade of thought or feeling, without utterance—and some of her portraits of silent passion were among the greatest of her efforts. To all these bodily endowments Mrs Siddons added a judgment so unerring—a conception of character so just and so profound—that she communicated even to the noblest creations of our greatest poets something more noble and more great.

However perfect an actor's judgment may be, if nature have limited his bodily powers, he cannot attempt the higher flights of passion, without the risk of becoming bombastic or ungraceful—perhaps even ridiculous. But it was in such passages that Mrs Siddons rose to her highest excellence. Such were the reach and flexibility of her bodily powers, that they kept pace with the highest conceptions of her mind: and she achieved her greatest triumphs in a region which other actors scarcely venture to approach. It was remarkable, too, that in the highest vehemence of passion, her countenance never assumed an unpleasant expression, nor her gestures an ungraceful movement.

In short, nothing which I have ever seen, in any branch of the arts, comes up to my idea of perfection, so completely as the performance of Mrs Siddons. In almost every exertion of art, however admirable, you still can imagine something to improve: but in her performance, not only was it impossible to detect a fault, but no one could form any conception of such excellence without actually seeing it.

It has been often remarked, that the fame of an actor is—in proportion to the rare endowments required for his success—unjustly transitory—from the evanescent nature of his exertions. He cannot, like the poet or the painter, fix his excellences in a durable record, so as to be justly appreciated by after times. The powers of Garrick, so much admired by his contemporaries, are already waxing faint and cold on the imagination: and we regret that no competent judge has done all that might have been done to preserve a more perfect register of his achievements. This consideration has induced me to collect a few gleanings relative to the great actress of our times, before all living memory of her powers shall pass away with the lives of those by whom they were witnessed.

By way of introduction to this design (the execution of which I must reserve for future occasions), I will narrate an event which occurred on the first appearance of Mrs Siddons in this city, in the year 1784. It will perhaps manifest the triumph of her powers as strongly as any minuter representation which I could give. I was then a young man, residing here as a student at our College, and became a devoted admirer of the great tragedian. The excitement and agitation, not to say delirium, created in our sober city by her presence, is scarcely to be believed. Soon after mid-day, crowds besieged the doors of the theatre. Ancient gentlemen, and delicate females, were seen exposing themselves to inconvenience, fatigue, and even danger, to get a glimpse of this prodigy. No respect of persons could be maintained amid such eagerness of competition, and a seat in the shilling gallery was hailed as good fortune by a duchess. During the performance, the effects were still more striking. The firmest-minded men melted into tears; ladies were carried out in violent hysterics; the high and the low, the young and the old, the ignorant and the refined, all yielded before the resistless power; and minute criticism was lost in a tumult of overwhelming applause.

Amidst all this fever of admiration, however, there was one individual who remained uninfected. This was an intelligent and accomplished Frenchman, who had come to spend some years in this city, and with whom I was on habits of intimacy. We had entered into a mutual treaty to teach each other our respective languages; but I must own that I had the lion's share of the bargain. My friend was beset with all the prejudices of his country, and among others a thorough contempt for every language and literature but his own. He was hence a willing teacher, but a most unwilling scholar; and while I largely profited by his lessons, he would scarcely listen to mine. Our conversation and reading were therefore chiefly confined to his native tongue. Under his guidance I perused with much advantage the classics of his country; but in the course of our studies I maintained many a hard fight with him on the merits of English literature. His politeness never failed; but he hearkened to me with that smiling unassuming superiority with which we regard the talk of a promising child.

On the arrival of Mrs Siddons, I was resolved to



submit to this cool assumption no longer. Proud of her, as the glory of our country, I determined to make my friend witness her powers, whether he would or not, and confess the inferiority of the Parisian stage. The play I selected for my experiment was *Venice Preserved*, the unity and simplicity of whose fable seemed calculated to please a French critic. I began by insisting that we should read it over together, a ceremony which my friend would willingly have dispensed with. The copy which I brought for his use was purged of the burlesque scenes (which are, indeed, generally omitted in the later editions), and down we sat to our studies. I not only (like Mr Bayes) instilled the plot into him, but commented on every scene, and almost every word, till at last I got my disciple fully to comprehend the piece. Among all his prejudices, he was a man of accomplishment and deep sensibility, and gradually awakened to the merits of this noble drama. He even allowed that the fable was so simple, and so touching, that it almost deserved to have been adorned by the genius of Racine.

Thus prepared, I called, in a hackney coach, for my friend, on the evening of the performance, and we drove to the theatre. By a small application of that specific which oils the wheels of life, I procured for my friend and myself a seat in the centre of the pit, before the general auditory were admitted. Here, however, we had to wait two mortal hours before the play began; during which space I endeavoured to keep my friend in good humour, by going to the full stretch of my conscience, in commendation of the French drama. By way of preparing the way for our English artist, I ventured a distant hint on the exaggerated style of tragic acting in France, contrasted with the good taste and simplicity of their comedy. My friend was just about to reply when the curtain rose.

The part of Jaffier was filled by Woods, an actor who, under a mean exterior, possessed such spirit and judgment as long ensured the favour of the Edinburgh audience. Pierre was also respectably performed—I forget by whom. These two characters, along with Belvidera, do in fact make up the whole drama. The two first scenes—though beautiful in themselves—were now impatiently listened to, as delaying the chief attraction. On their conclusion, Jaffier turned to welcome his lovely wife. Before she appeared, her thrilling tones were heard behind the scenes, as she uttered the words—"Lead, lead me, ye virgins, on to that kind voice;" and the audience were mute as silence. She then entered—all radiant with grace and beauty—and advanced towards Jaffier; but was soon obliged to interrupt the fictitious scene, by acknowledging the tumultuous welcome with which she was greeted. The dialogue which ensues between Jaffier and Belvidera is elegant and pleasing, but nothing more—and concludes the act.

The next display of our great actress was in that heartrending scene which concludes the second act, where Jaffier delivers her as a pledge into the hands of the conspirators. Here at once burst forth all her powers. Her struggles for release—her piercing cries—the agony of her terror, love, and grief—united to harrow up the soul; and the scene ended in a deep murmur of sympathy and applause. In the interval of the acts, I turned to my friend. He was deeply affected, and unwilling to speak. He only said, "C'est sublime!"

The third act opens with the beautiful scene between Jaffier and Belvidera, where she complains of the insult offered to her by Renault, and reproaches him for his unkindness and want of confidence. He then unfolds to her the whole secret of the conspiracy. The communication of its horrid purposes, and her father's danger, again drew forth the terrible powers of this great performer; while the softer expostulations with her husband were touched with the most persuasive skill.

In the fourth act, the plot is unfolded to the senate: the conspirators are condemned; and Jaffier—in a scene of great energy—is cast off by his indignant friend as a betrayer and a coward. Then comes that fearful interview between Jaffier and Belvidera, where (under the exasperation of his wounded feelings) he twice attempts her life; and where she at last leaps on his neck, and softens him to love. It is needless to say that, in the various turns of this scene, the great enchantress swayed our feelings to her will, and overwhelmed the soul in irresistible emotion.

Lastly, came the concluding act of this noble drama. The first scene betwixt Belvidera and her father is graceful and pleasing, but aims at nothing higher. Next, however, succeeds that terrible meeting betwixt her and Jaffier, where they are interrupted by the tolling bell which announces the death of his friends. The start of surprise, the attitude of speechless horror, assumed by Mrs Siddons at this alarm, still freezes the blood on recollection. Soon after, follow in quick succession the closing paroxysms of despair, madness, and death. To convey by words, to one who never saw it, even the slightest conception of this part of her performance, is impossible. It could only be felt; it cannot be described. Suffice it to say, that the force of her action—the electrifying bursts of her voice—the varying magic of her eye—expressed every change of agony with such fearful truth, that it awakened an intenseness of sympathy almost too painful to be endured.

At the close of the performance, the audience remained for some time absorbed in a stillness of feel-

ing, too deep for any audible expression. This was succeeded by a general sigh, which relieved the over-fraught heart, and afterwards found vent in tears. I had been myself so wound up in the scene, that I had almost forgot the main object of my coming. I now, however, turned to speak to my friend, but was surprised to see him, with his hat drawn over his eyes, pushing his way eagerly through the crowd, till he reached the pit door, through which he disappeared. I myself soon after returned home.

On calling next morning to inquire after my friend, and learn the cause of his sudden retreat, he told me that he never had experienced any thing similar from the dramatic art; nor could he have believed it possible, had he not actually felt it. That all he had ever seen, or even imagined, of tragic performance, was a mere shadow to what he had witnessed last night. That, at the conclusion of the piece, he had felt all his faculties bound up in such a state of painful tension, that he could hardly breathe. That he had rushed home to his lodgings—hurried up to his chamber—looked himself in—and thrown himself on his bed—where, after passing a few moments in great agony, he was relieved by a copious flood of tears. But for that relief, he declared that he must have fainted: "Oh! mon ami," continued he, "c'est une femme sans paille—sans prix" (that is a woman beyond all parallel—above all price.)

Mrs Siddons having acquired an ample fortune, took her leave of the stage in 1812. She, however, performed in 1816 for the benefit of her brother, Mr Charles Kemble, and a few nights at Edinburgh, to assist her daughter-in-law, Mrs Henry Siddons. She died on the 8th of June 1831.

#### A DISPOSITION TO SATIRE.

A SATIRICAL disposition is one of those errors into which young persons, more perhaps from thoughtlessness or an unsound state of feeling than ill nature, are very apt to fall. A literary gentleman in whom we feel much interested, has acknowledged to us, that, when a very young man, and just beginning to apply his mind to literature, he was much addicted to satire, and was constantly burlesquing individuals and communities either by the tongue or the pen. He is persuaded that this disposition did not take its rise in any malignity of nature, but only in a sense of unimportance and obscurity, and a vain notion of his being superior in some respects to others, who, from position or seniority, enjoyed more of the world's regard. He is now deeply sensible of the impropriety of such conduct, and advises all young men who may feel the same tendencies, whether from the same or from different motives, to pause before they write or speak satirically, as transgressions of this kind, though gratifying at the moment, are almost sure, when different circumstances have brought different feelings, to be a source of bitter regret.

It would be hard to say whether the most admired satirical compositions have ever done any good, especially those which were aimed at individuals; and certainly those which deal in personal abuse and sarcasm, if not provoked by attacks equally personal, are quite as reprehensible an invasion of the rights of our fellow-creatures, as assaults upon their persons or depredations upon their property. But the habit is particularly to be deplored in young persons, who, instead of rancour and bitterness, might rather be expected to display benevolence and mildness, and whose sense of what is right and wrong in others cannot be supposed to be very clear. The celebrated Franklin was in his early years much given to lampooning, but as he grew older, he became aware of the absurdity and wickedness of his conduct, and, in his account of his own life, he thus adverts to adult pasquinades:—"In the conduct of my newspaper, I carefully excluded all libelling and personal abuse, which is of late years become so disgraceful to our country. Whenever I was solicited to insert any thing of that kind, and the writers pleaded (as they generally did) the liberty of the press, and that a newspaper was like a stage-coach, in which any one who would pay had a right to a place, my answer was, that I would print the piece separately, if desired, and the author might have as many copies as he pleased to distribute himself, but that I would not take it upon me to spread his detraction; and that, having contracted to furnish my readers with what might be either useful or entertaining, I could not fill their papers with alteration in which they had no concern, without doing them manifest injustice. This I mention as a caution to young printers, and that they may be encouraged not to pollute their presses and disgrace their profession by such infamous practices, but refuse steadily, as they may see by my example that such a course of conduct will not, on the whole, be injurious to themselves."

The opinion of another great man may be adduced

in reference to satirical habits, and their results. "Upon considering," says Sir Walter Scott, "the lives and fortunes of persons who had given themselves up to literature, or to the task of pleasing the public, it seemed to me that the circumstances which chiefly affected their happiness and character were those from which Horace has bestowed upon authors the epithet of the Irritable Race. It requires no depth of philosophic reflection to perceive that the petty warfare of Pope with the dunces of his period, could not have been carried on, without his suffering the most acute torture, such as a man must endure from mosquitoes, by whose stings he suffers agony, though he can crush them in his grasp by myriads. \* \* \* I determined that, without shutting my ears to the voice of true criticism, I would pay no regard to that which assumes the form of satire. I therefore resolved to arm myself with the triple brass of Horace against all the roving warfare of satire, parody, and sarcasm; to laugh, if the jest was a good one, or, if otherwise, to let it hum and buzz itself to sleep. It is to the observance of these rules (according to my best belief) that, after a life of thirty years engaged in literary labours of various kinds, I attribute my never having been entangled in any literary quarrel or controversy; and, which is a more pleasing result, that I have been distinguished by the personal friendship of my most approved contemporaries of all parties."

It is indeed hardly necessary to point out how applicable to this question are the common maxims as to the return of kindness for kindness, and the equal certainty of the sword cutting off those who are inclined to live by it. There is enough of the sense of justice in the world to protect the truly inoffensive and good from assault, or to revenge it if it should take place, without their being called on to show a similar spirit in return. Thus even a casual temptation into the exercise of this dangerous weapon may be obviated. But it is much to be feared, that, whatever may be the apparent superiority of the satirist over his subject, in position, in intellect, or in moral worth, there is rarely an exercise of the power which does not spring from some secret consciousness of a deficiency or inferiority on the part of him who uses it.

#### MECHANISM OF CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL.

OF the many thousands of individuals who regularly peruse these and other extensively circulated sheets, there are few, perhaps, who have any idea of the various processes by which they are prepared and rendered available to the public. Most people are in some measure acquainted with the manner in which types are put together by compositors, and how, after being put up, they are printed from by a press wrought by a couple of men. But, in modern times, a great revolution has taken place in the business of the printer; and in order to furnish our numerous readers, particularly our inquiring young friends, with a knowledge of the wonderful changes which have taken place in this interesting department of the arts, we shall here give a description of the whole process pursued in the getting up of Chambers's Journal, from the writing of the articles to the placing of the paper in the hands of the purchaser.

##### WRITING.

The writing, or preparation of the articles for our publication, may be first slightly touched upon. All the articles, not including pieces which require to be copied from books, are written, with very few exceptions, by one or other of the conductors, in the way usually followed by persons who compose for the press—namely, on leaves of the kind of paper called foolscap, of which, however, only one side is used. By writing on one side of the sheet, the compositors are enabled to cut the leaves in pieces, if required, each taking a piece so as to facilitate the work. Individuals who are not accustomed to literary composition commonly write on both sides of the paper, which sometimes proves an annoyance to compositors and correctors of the press. A page of foolscap holds about thirty lines of writing; and counting line for line, it requires two thousand five hundred and thirty-eight lines, or eighty-four pages of manuscript, to fill the Journal. Deducting from one to two pages of quoted matter (though even in such cases the matter is often partially written off, in order to purify or simplify expression, and for the purpose of condensation), the average quantity of writing amounts to from sixty to seventy pages weekly. The articles, being thus written on loose leaves or slips of paper, are handed out to the superintendent of the composing-room, to be put up in types.

##### PREPARING THE PAGES.

By a convenient arrangement, the composing-room is situated underneath our publishing premises; and here several men and boys are constantly engaged in arranging, or, as it is technically called, *setting*, the types of our different publications. The first step in the process after *setting*, is to place the matter in long columns, in frames called *galley*s, and in that form to take proofs for correction. The drawing of proofs from

the matter in the galleys is usually performed in printing-offices by an old large hand-press, kept for the purpose. But this is an awkward process, which we have found means to avoid. The apparatus employed in our printing-office consists of a table on which the galley is laid; the types being inked, and a slip of paper laid on, a small iron roller covered with cloth is rolled over the surface, and in an instant prints the required proof. We consider this an exceedingly convenient little piece of mechanism, and one which might be introduced with advantage into other printing-offices. After proofs are thus taken, they are corrected and revised by a reader, and clean proofs are then handed to the author for examination, previous to being put up in pages. In the conducting of newspapers and other periodical publications, it is of considerable importance for the editor to have a large number of articles in proof, from which he can have a varied selection in making up numbers of his work. In the case of our own establishment, we have usually as much matter standing in galley proofs as would make at least two numbers. By this means we are enabled to make up a number with a choice of articles, varied both in their subject-matter and in their length.

The proofs having been duly corrected both by the reader and the author, the matter is now ready for being arranged and made up into pages of the proper dimensions. In the business of making up, a good deal of care is required on the part of the superintendent, who, in following out the scheme which is given to him for placing the articles, contrives that they shall individually begin and end at certain parts of the page, so that the titles may readily meet the eye of the reader. A want of care in this respect would often cause articles to begin two or three lines from the bottom of a column, which would indicate a slovenliness in manner, and prove unseemly when the sheet was printed. Bit by bit, therefore, are the pages made up from the galley matter, till the whole eight pages are completed. When this is done, each page of types is separately fixed up in an iron frame, called a *chess*, and again subjected to proof by an impression on paper. Being in this form thoroughly revised and prepared for meeting the public eye, the pages are considered ready for stereotyping.

#### STEREOTYPING.

The process of stereotyping has rarely been used with so much advantage as in the case of the present publication. We shall describe it in very brief terms. The pages of types prepared as we have just described, being carried from the composing-room to the foundry of the stereotyper, are there, one by one, laid on a table, and completely covered with liquid stucco, or a mixture of finely baked and ground plaster-of-Paris and water. This mixture, which is applied with a soft brush, resembles thick white cream; but it hardens in a few minutes into a cake, which is regulated to about half an inch in thickness, and is easily loosened and lifted from the surface of the page. The cake, which is called a mould, on being turned up, offers to the eye a hollow or sunk representation of the faces of the types and every thing else in the page. In stereotyping the pages of the Journal, two moulds are taken from each, after which the pages are put aside. Now begins the difficult part of the process. The moulds are placed in an oven with a good fire underneath, and there baked for several hours till they have a brown appearance, and are almost as hard as a piece of stoneware. From this situation they are transferred in a highly heated condition to pans prepared for their reception. The pans are made of iron, somewhat larger than one of our pages in size, of an oblong form, and about two inches deep. An iron lid is fitted on each, having a notch out of each of the four corners to admit the melted lead into the pan. These iron pans with their lids must be in as hot a condition as the moulds, and both as nearly as possible as hot as the liquid metal into which they are about to be plunged. The mould being placed in the pan with its face downwards on a smooth plate, called a float-plate, lying in the bottom of the pan, the lid is adjusted and fixed by a screw, and the pan with its contents is cautiously lowered by a crane and other mechanism till it becomes immersed in a pot of molten metal, composed of lead, with a proportion of tin and antimony. After a due space of time, the pan is raised, and being cooled on a bed of wet sand, is opened. On opening the pan, a curious appearance is presented. The metal has run into the cavities of the mould, and formed a thin plate all over, exhibiting the perfect appearance of the faces of the types on which the stucco was plastered. When the page comes out of the pan, it is in a rude state, and requires to be carefully pruned at the edges, its little specks picked clean, and, if necessary, one or more letters cut out with a small chisel, and replaced by soldering in the heads of moveable types. The plate is also planed on the back by means of an ingenious rotatory cutting machine upon which it is fixed. Every page, mould, and plate, is thus treated singly; and thus are manufactured stereo-types, or fixed-type, plates. It will readily be supposed that the stucco mould is dashed in pieces in the releasing of the plate from the pan. The main difficulty in stereotyping pages so large as those of our Journal, is to prevent the mould from cracking in the pan, which occurs either from the difference of temperature or the pressure of the metal. So great is this difficulty, that our stereotyper is occasionally obliged to execute the process six times over, and spend several days and nights in exceedingly se-

vere labour, before he can secure perfect plates. We know of no department of the arts in which there exists greater room for improvement than this; and we would be delighted to hear that some man of science had invented a means of stereotyping, free from the risk of miscarriage such as we point out.

The process of stereotyping, which has hitherto been found advantageous only as a means of giving farther impressions of books without the expense of re-composing the types, is employed by the conductors of this paper for another and scarcely less important end. Of the fifty-five thousand copies which we usually sell within a short period from the date of each number, more than one-half are required to emanate from London, for the supply of the English trade. To transport such a vast quantity of printed paper every week from Edinburgh to London, would not only be attended with considerable expense, but, even with the present improved modes of conveyance, might be found a matter of no small difficulty. To obviate these disadvantages, we were induced, at an early period of our career, to constitute London a distinct centre for the printing and publishing of the work, our agent agreeing to make a certain allowance for the quantity which he found it necessary to take from the press. Two sets of stereotype plates were then prepared, one of which remained to be employed in Edinburgh, while the other was dispatched regularly to London; a small box, about the size of a quarto volume, being thus found to represent a whole wagon-load of paper, and to save the risk of a quantity of property infinitely more valuable.

The stereotyping process being finished, the chasses of types are remanded to the composing-office, in order that the letter of which they are composed may be used for farther work. The set of plates required for the Edinburgh impression is at the same time dispatched to the printing-office, which, having a steam-engine in connection with it, is necessarily situated in one of the meaner parts of the city. Each plate is in the first place fixed upon a block of wood, the thickness of which supplies exactly what is wanting of the usual depth of types; and the whole being arranged in two frames, corresponding with the two sides of the contemplated sheet, are then laid upon the printing-machine, and considered as ready to produce impressions.

#### STEAM-PRINTING.

Those who have never had an opportunity of seeing a printing-machine would doubtless find considerable difficulty in understanding a minute detail of its appearance and mode of operation: we shall therefore confine ourselves to a simple sketch of its outline and properties, avoiding all unintelligible and dry technicalities. Printing-machines were invented, or rather theorised upon, by Mr Nicholson, editor of the *Philosophical Journal*, about the year 1790; but they were first constructed and put into operation, if not invented anew, by a German named König, from twenty to thirty years ago, and set a-going in the printing of the *Times* newspaper, on the 28th of November 1814, steam being the propelling power. Since 1814, great improvements have been made on the mechanism, both with and without patents. The machines may be said to consist of two principal kinds—those which print only one side of a sheet of paper at a time, for newspaper work, and those which print both sides of the sheet, and are adapted for book work. That which prints the *Journal* is of the latter kind, and is among the largest which is made. It is entirely of iron, measures fifteen feet long, six feet high, and from four to five feet broad. In external appearance it seems to consist of an oblong frame, supporting a long table or type-carriage, above which, at the centre, are suspended on an upright part of the frame, two huge iron cylinders, each as large as a hoghead; above these are two smaller cylinders or drums. Around these large and small cylinders there is a complicated arrangement of tapes running upon pulleys. At each end of the table there are several composition rollers for inking the types or plates. The propelling power consists of a belt from a steam-engine. The belt turns an axle, which, by a process of wheels and rack, incessantly moves the table or type-carriage backwards and forwards, and at the same time moves round the cylinders above. By this continued action, the types are carried beneath the two large cylinders, which press upon them in passing in and out, and print the sheets which are let in between them. Every time the types pass in and out, they come under the inking-rollers and are inked, the ink being communicated to them by another roller, which in its turn is supplied from a fountain of that material. The types for one side of the paper lie at one end of the table, those for the other side lie at the other. The sheet is let in at one end, where it is caught by the encircling tapes, and led down the first cylinder, beneath which it gets its first impression; pursuing its way onwards, it is led up the other side of the cylinder, and round the two upper drums in a serpentine direction, till it meets the second cylinder; it now goes round that cylinder as it did the first, getting its second impression as it passes; and, being now completely printed, it falls out on a board, and is removed. One boy is continually feeding in blank sheets in this manner, while another is busied in taking them out printed. From its entrance to its exit, the sheet is held to the cylinders and drums by the tapes pressing upon its margins. The great and important object to be attained in a machine of this description,

is to cause the sheet, after it has received its first impression, to travel along the surface of the cylinders and drums at such a rate as to meet the types of the second side at the exact point which will cause the second side to fall with perfect accuracy upon the back of the first. To accomplish this desirable end, the cylinders and drums must revolve at precisely the same speed as the carriage underneath travels; and, therefore, any inaccuracy in the turning of the axles, the cutting of the teeth of the wheels, or any other deficiency, however slight, will produce uneven impressions, and frustrate the utility of the machine.

The rate of speed at which the machine now described was originally calculated to print, was seven hundred and fifty sheets in the hour; but it has been found that it will send forth with ease eight hundred, or, if necessary, nine hundred, an hour, or fifteen sheets in the minute, perfect, and completely printed on both sides. From the time it was put up and fairly set to work, it has produced, in general, eight thousand (but sometimes as many as twelve thousand) sheets per day, never tiring in its arduous labours, and never stopping unless during the night and on Sundays, or when it happens to outstrip the compositors and stereotyper in the execution of their departments of the work. Prodigious as the quantity of printing is which this excellent machine executes, and great as is its rate of speed, not less astonishing is the smallness of the power employed in keeping it going, and the lightness of the duty of those who attend on its operations. It is placed at the end of a large well-lighted apartment on a ground floor, and the power is communicated to it by a belt proceeding through a hole cut in the wall from a small steam-engine standing in a side-room. This engine is of no more than two-horse power, and is kept in motion by a boiler in a place adjacent. To regulate the engine, a man is employed, and the same person supplies the furnace with coal. Of this necessary article, about half a ton is consumed daily.

The printing-machine is under the superintendence of a steady person, well acquainted with the art of printing: it is his duty to place and displace the forms, or plates, to supply fresh bundles of paper, and take away the lots which have been printed; to regulate the darkness of the inking, to mend the tapes when any of them are accidentally broken, and, in short, to take complete cognisance of the whole process. The only other individuals engaged about the machine are two boys, one of whom lays on blank sheets, and the other as continuously takes them out when printed. These, therefore, form the complement of individuals employed in connection with the process of steam-printing; but in the same apartment in which our machine works, other two men are engaged—one whose duty consists in damping and preparing the paper, carrying forms, &c.; and another, who is constantly engaged in counting off the printed sheets, and putting them in quires, preparatory to their being packed up and sent off to the booksellers in the various parts of the country.

The nature and extent of the steam-press establishment which prints our sheets in Edinburgh, are now described; and it may be mentioned, that, on a similar, but more extensive scale, is the establishment of our agents in London, at which the editions of our works are printed for circulation in England. It will readily be supposed that the expense of erecting the machinery which we have noticed, is by no means inconsiderable, even although printing-machines have fallen in price since the expiry of the patents. The machine which we have described cost upwards of £300; but the erection of the steam-engine, and other accessories, amounted to at least £200 additional. The manufacturers were Claud Girdwood and Company, Glasgow, upon the engineering plans of Mr Robert Gunn of Edinburgh.

#### USES OF STEAM-PRINTING.

If the dissemination of printed sheets at a low price be beneficial to the world at large, the benefit is produced entirely through the agency of machinery. Unless our paper were made by a machine, as has been described in a former article, and then printed by a machine, the price of each sheet, instead of being three-halfpence, would be at least threepence. It is questionable, indeed, if the publication could be issued were hand-labour only employed. Here we speak from experience. For some time after the establishment of the present work, it was printed by hand, the Edinburgh impression of twenty-five thousand copies occupying two presses night and day for six days in the week, there being eight men employed, four acting as a relief during the night. Yet with this extent of labour the publication was frequently kept back so late as to prevent the dispatch of country parcels. It almost appeared that human nature could not stand up against such violent labour. No amount of wages seemed able to cause the workmen to remain sober. The greater the urgency for the work, and the higher the price paid for its execution, the more extensive were the saturnalia that prevailed; notwithstanding the utmost attention of the master-printers, the stereo-type plates were damaged, and the paper wasted. On one occasion we could not get the work printed at any price in Edinburgh, and were compelled to send it to Glasgow to be executed. Such occurrences as these, and the dreadful harassment of mind which ensued, led us to think of removing the whole of our printing business to London. From taking this step, however, we were saved by Messrs Ballantyne and Company



undertaking to execute our printing with their machines; and with these our Journal was printed until our own machine commenced working in January 1834. Those only who have experienced the same species of vexation which we had done, can understand the feeling of delight which animated us on first seeing this machine regularly at work, and both by the quantity and quality of its produce affording a joyful prospect of future tranquillity.

We mention these circumstances with the view of pointing out the utter inability of hand-presses to execute large impressions, especially of periodicals. With the best hand-presses no more than two hundred and fifty impressions, or one hundred and twenty-five complete sheets, are executed in an hour—a rate of speed only suitable for the printing of book-work, or when limited impressions are required. For these purposes hand-labour answers the end fully better than machines; and therefore the use of presses cannot be said to be in any respect diminished. Free trade in this, as in every other branch of the arts, proves ultimately beneficial to all:—the appetite for reading which sheets like the present create, leads to the reading, and consequently to the increased printing, of books, and that in most instances by presses wrought with the hand; thus, machinery, instead of injuring, improves the condition of the workman.

By the erection of steam-presses, the three grand requisites, speediness of execution, quantity, and cheapness of labour, are procured to an extent demanded by the necessities of the age, and without the aid of printing-machinery, the tide of knowledge and human improvement would be forced back, greatly to the injury of society. Nothing, in our opinion, within the compass of British manufacturing industry, presents so stupendous a spectacle of moral power, working through the means of inert mechanism, as that which is exhibited by the action of the steam-press.

#### USES OF BIRDS.

WE remember some years ago being a good deal amused with an article in one of the Journals of Agriculture, by the Ettrick Shepherd, on the effects of mole-catching. He affirmed that moles are exceedingly useful animals, for they turn up the fresh earth on meadow and pasture lands; which earth being afterwards spread by rooks in search of worms, a natural top dressing is the result, and so the land is benefited. He therefore lustily protested against the cruel and ruinous practices of the mole-catcher. He at the same time took occasion to clear up the character of that ill-used bird, the cushat, or cushie doo, as it is called in Scotland. "In the winter and spring of 1825-6 (says he) this district was inundated with innumerable flocks of wild pigeons or wood pigeons, I know not which, perhaps a mixture of both. For some time I paid no regard to them, till one morning my maid comes in, and says, 'Master, I wuss ye wud rise out o' yer bed an' shoot thae cushie doos. Od it's ma belief they're gaun wi' the young clover bodily, an' that they'll no leave a stab o't. There's mair nor a hunder thousand on't the day.' This rather alarmed me, so I got several guns loaded, and gave all the men orders to shoot at them as soon as they alighted. The fun that followed was very amusing. Every workman rejoices in a job of this sort, as a relaxation from labour. The shepherd left his flock, the thrasher his flail hanging over the barn-door, and the ploughman left his plough standing in the furrow, 'to get a pluff at the cushie doos;' and there were they going daily cowering about the backs of dikes and hedges like as many sharpshooters thundering away as if the French had been in the field. But the marksmen were bad, and the birds shy, and they generally escaped with life, though, by report, at the expense of a number of their feathers. At length a lad brought in two one day, and on opening the crops, which were crammed one would have thought to bursting, there was not a particle of any thing else in them except the seeds of the runc or wild mustard. I examined the contents of both with a microscope, and called in all the servants to witness it. They were all obliged to acknowledge the fact; and forthwith a bill of emancipation was passed in favour of the cushie doos. The persecution of them ceased, and from that day to this they have been free to come and go at their pleasure."

The argument used by the Shepherd is certainly carried a little bit too far, but is nevertheless bottomed on sound philosophical conclusions. No animal is created for nothing. There is a meaning in the existence of the most loathsome and troublesome creature, if we could but find it out. There is method in the whole circle of nature's works; and if we expiarte a race of animals apparently useless, we may perhaps discover, when too late, that we have committed a fatal error.

In a delightful little book recently published, entitled "The Natural History of Birds, by Robert Mudie," we find an argument of this nature employed in reference to the general utility of the feathered tribes. "Besides being pruners and weeders to the vegetable kingdom (says the author), and a sort of general scavengers for removing the waste of all nature, birds appear specially appointed for keeping within proper bounds the numbers of fishes, molluscs, insects, and reptiles. The power of production in all of these is very great: and, with the exception of the fishes, which

settle matters by eating each other (often their own species), this productiveness is far above the average support, or even the room which there is for them in nature. The tadpoles which appear in one brook, would, were they all to live and breed, speedily cover a county with frogs; the caterpillars on one branch would, if so breeding, soon clear a forest; and the snails would speedily multiply till not a green leaf were to be found. The ophidian and saurian reptiles are, in many of their species, co-operators with the birds; but they frequent the places where the food of birds is abundant, and they are not fitted for long migrations. The motions of molluscan animals are proverbially slow; and though many of the insect tribes are clever on the feet, the wing, or both, they are not capable of long journeys. Locusts and some other tribes do migrate; but no insects can continue long on the wing. They want the feathers, the characteristic organs of long flight; and though their muscles act to very considerable advantage, they must move their wings so incessantly, that they are soon worn out, and fall to the earth.

There is here a very beautiful chain of adaptations, which is worthy of study in itself, besides being intimately connected with the general economy and structure of birds. All these natural trimmers of the exuberance and removers of the waste of growing nature are wanted, up to the full amount of their powers. But they are so wanted only for a season; and though that season varies in length in different latitudes and climates, there is not a spot on earth where it could be perennial, or even of one whole year's unbroken duration, unless the laws of the whole system, that is, the qualities of the several parts of which it is made up, were totally changed. The vegetables could not bring all their 'braids' and buds to maturity, nor would the earth supply sowing ground for all their seeds; and the creatures, of whatever kind, which keep down the superabundance of these, would in like manner speedily overstock the room that there is for them. But still they must all have that elasticity by means of which they can instantly adapt themselves to the changes of the system. The earth consists of a definite quantity of matter, occupying a definite space; and to that quantity and that space all the productions of the earth must be capable of accommodating themselves, otherwise the system would be imperfect.

The earth itself is perhaps at once the best index to the system of the earth's productions, and the best illustration of the mode in which that system works. It careers round the sun, altering its distance from that luminary, and the rate of its motion, every moment, and differently affected as its own attendant moon, or any other body in the solar system, is differently situated with respect to it. But though altered, it is not disturbed; the balance is never deranged, and we are so far from feeling the inequalities of its motions, that it is only after the most profound investigation that we become aware of their taking place. The law which God has given it is a perfect law; and no case can arise to which it does not apply with the same ease and the same certainty. If the motion requires to be accelerated or retarded, in order to keep up the perfect balance, the very necessity for the change is in itself the cause of that change; and, be the aberration ever so much, there is always a principle inseparably connected with it, which in due time produces a return.

Just so with the growing and living productions of nature; if the general circumstances are such as to harmonise with an increase, there is no waiting for that increase as man must wait in his workings, and no toil as he must toil to bring it about. The necessity and the supply come so simultaneously, that the one cannot be called the cause and the other the effect. They at once prove their origin from the same cause; and that that cause is no part of the system of nature, although intimately familiar with it all in extent and in duration.

The preservation of the whole system of nature requires that, at certain pauses, and those not very wide of each other, the races which, among their other uses, put the birds in motion, must be as 'the dry bones in the valley of death;' but the Author of nature has so ordered, that, when their activity becomes necessary, there is 'a spirit' breathed upon them from the system, which can, unseen, and in an instant, pass over them, and recal them to life and activity. Thus the cold winter of the polar climes, and the withering drought of the equator, are alike necessary for preserving the energy and the beauty of the world.

All preyers, and birds in an especial manner, as being the most discursive rangers, are highly valuable. They give play to the energy of life generally in that which they individually destroy; and but for them the earth would become rank and foul with the carcasses of those tribes which must perish and be renewed in the different seasons.

In the performance of these labours, many species of birds have to prey upon animals, the immediate contact of which with the body of the bird would be attended with fatal consequences; and in other cases the prey is in places which the bird cannot with safety approach too closely. The parts of birds which are naked of feathers, whether they are covered with horn or with skin, contain few muscles or blood-vessels, so that they are not easily wounded or otherwise injured in such a manner as to affect the general economy and

action of the bird. This is the more necessary on account of some of the creatures upon which the birds feed being capable of inflicting poisoned wounds, all of which would be painful in the fleshy parts of the bird, and some of them very speedily fatal. It does not appear that the animal poisons, known by the general name of venom, are deadly, or even in the least injurious, if they are not taken into the circulating blood. Whether they must be so taken by direct introduction into a blood-vessel, in order to produce their fatal effects, or whether the poison may be carried into the circulation by the lymphatics, which pour what they collect into the veins through the thoracic duct, is not clearly ascertained; but as the effect of those poisons always shows itself locally, near the place of the wound, before it injures the system generally, it is proper that a direct mixture of the venomous fluid with the blood is necessary, in order that it may produce its destructive effects; and this is rendered the more probable, from the fact that the same fluid may be taken into the stomach without the smallest injury, by animals to which it would prove fatal in a very short time if taken into the blood.

Many birds feed upon creatures provided with poisoning apparatus—as the bee-eaters and other species feed upon many insects that have poisoned stings; and various species of birds feed upon serpents which have poison fangs. Now, all those birds are so constructed, that those parts of their bodies which could be seriously injured by the sting on the fangs, are kept out of the way. If, like the bee-eaters, they capture stinging insects on the wing, the bill is long, and the tongue either short or indurated, so that no part of them which comes in contact with the insect is liable to be hurt by its puncture or its venom. In those species which eat poisonous snakes, the bill is long, and the tarsi also, so that all those parts of the bird which are vulnerable by the reptile are elevated above its reach after it is once pressed to the earth by the feet, when it is not at once killed by the stroke of these on the head, which is a very common habit with birds in the case of such prey. If food which is thus dangerous is taken by the bird on the wing, as is the case with wasps and other venomous insects, the bill is long, and the tongue either short or callous towards the tip, so as not to be very liable to injury if the snap of the bill, which however is seldom the case, should fall in dispatching the insect."

**POVERTY NOT A NATURAL EVIL.**—There are certain evils which affect society, and which do their full part in making this a world of woe. There is squalid, miserable poverty; there is disgusting, lamentable vice; there is horrible crime, public execution, and national war. All these things, it is said, are inevitable; they spring from the nature of man, and from the laws which compel him to dwell in social connection. Those who say so are shallow thinkers. The world is naturally a beautiful world. But what God has made a Paradise for our dwelling-place, mankind have often rendered a desert by their crimes. Nature and revelation alike proclaim that the Creator intended we should be happy; but how has brutal ignorance, vile intemperance, gross crime, and every species of evil desires, blighted our comforts and degraded our immortal being! It has never yet been proved that there must necessarily be poverty, which is the source of many evils. A striking instance of the absence of poverty in a large class of society is found in the case of the Quakers, or community of Friends. With some peculiarities in speech and dress, not worth while to heed, this numerous body of individuals act upon a fixed uniform principle of suppressing the passions. They curb the appetites and headlong impulses of human nature. In this may be said to lie the substance of sound morals. The Quakers, therefore, habitually practise what other classes only theorise upon, at least are seldom performing. The consequence of this guardedness in thought and action is, that although there are many thousands of Quakers in Great Britain, and many thousands in the United States of America, neither in the one country nor the other do we ever find a Quaker begging in the streets, or an intoxicated Quaker, or any one of this class of subjects and citizens at the bar of a criminal court! The Quakers are, like other people, engaged in the common affairs of the world; they are merchants, mechanics, artificers, mariners, and otherwise employed in the ordinary business of life. They are subject to the same temptations and perversions that we are; yet, by the exercise of a singular degree of prudence, they avoid them. Here, then, is a clear demonstration, that even without the aid of civil power, but by the mere force of moral influence, there is a class of men, in the midst of society, who do escape disgraceful poverty, and who are generally free from vice and crime.

**EARTHQUAKES.**—The phenomena of earthquakes seem strongly to indicate the action of elastic fluids endeavouring to force their way into the atmosphere. On the shores of the South Sea the concussion is almost instantaneously communicated from Chili to the Gulf of Guayaquil, over a space of 2070 miles. The shocks also appear to be so much stronger the more distant the country is from active volcanoes; and a province is the more agitated, the smaller the number of funnels by which the subterranean cavities communicate with the open air.—*Humboldt's Travels: Edinburgh Cabinet Library.*

## Column for Fathers of Families.

THE number of instances daily occurring of fathers of families being put to considerable trouble and expense—say, of having their hearts broken—in consequence of the conduct of their children, induces me to say a few words by way of friendly advice to individuals who already are or may happen to be so circumstanced.

Fathers of families may be divided into two classes—those who have nothing, and those who have something. A poor and industrious man who has nothing to give, or little of which he can be plundered, has generally little to fear from his family. Besides supporting his children during infancy, he has only to give them a plain education consistent with his means, and then, after seeing them put to some honest calling, which will in time support them, leave them in a great measure to shift for themselves. Parents so circumstanced have thus little annoyance to dread. Provided they have done their duty to their offspring in respect of admonition and education, as well as set before them a good example for their imitation, they have done all that can be required at their hands. If their children after all this go astray, the parents cannot be blamed; they are worthy of our sympathy and commiseration, but not obnoxious to our reproach. The class of fathers who have the most difficult part to act are those who have something. Of this order there are innumerable varieties. One has a business producing a pretty good current revenue; another has a tolerably comfortable situation with a fixed salary; and a third has retired from the busy scenes of life with a competency—as much, I shall say, as will keep him and his wife, and perhaps one or two junior branches of his family, in comfort during the remainder of his existence. It is chiefly persons who are placed in these or similar circumstances that are subject to vexation from their families. When they began life themselves, they were obliged to undergo many privations, perhaps suffer not a few contumelies, as they thought them, before they attained any thing like a condition of comparative repose. The reason for their having undergone such a probation was, that they had nothing to look for from their parents, and so were compelled to rely on their own resources. But the same reason does not hold good with respect to their sons. These sons are in the first place nurtured in a superior manner; they are better fed, lodged, clothed, and educated, than their fathers were at their age. It is natural they should be so, and there is no harm in it, provided the subsequent conduct be conformable. It would appear to be next to an impossibility for fathers in easy circumstances to give their children a share of the comforts they enjoy, and at the same time bring them up with the notions which they themselves had when they were young. And here lies the chief point for consideration. The class of fathers I am speaking of, have either fortunes to give their children, who will on that account be put beyond the necessity for particular exertion, or they have not. I believe, in ninety-nine cases in the hundred, they have not. They have little more than a competency for their own use. In such a case, difficult as the task may be, fathers have a clear line of duty chalked out for them to follow.

Boys, as they grow up, have a wonderful aptitude in catching up the idea of their father having money. If they see him always well dressed, living in what they think a superior kind of house, and his whole system of management more lavish than that of his neighbours, then they consider him to be a rich man, one who has plenty, and that he can well afford to bring them up gentlemen. Perhaps they have no decided disinclination to try to do something for themselves; but what they do must be done in a genteel way: they have no objection to be put to some refined profession, in which they will be able to live without any kind of drudgery. Boys pick up ideas of this kind very early, and it should be the object of the father who wishes to see them pursue an honourable and honest career, to counteract such notions ere they have become too strong to be unmanageable. In following his line of duty, the father should commence with studying the dispositions and abilities of his sons, after which he will bestow upon them an education suitable to these qualifications. In judging of their abilities, it is of great consequence that fathers do not confound the qualification of a good memory with talent. I have known many boys who were reckoned exceedingly clever, simply from their being able to get any kind of lesson quickly by heart; which was a complete fallacy. Memory may go along with

genius, but it has no absolute connection with it; as a proof of which, it may be remarked that the boys who stand dux at school are frequently left far behind in the struggle of life by boys who stood for years at the foot of their class. If we were to inquire into the biographies of distinguished individuals, we should discover that comparatively few of them had been "good scholars"—that is, had memories to repeat lessons by rote.

But the father will do more than study the natural abilities of his sons, in giving them a proper education—he will put them through such a course of instruction as appears suitable to the profession they have a chance to follow. I should imagine, for instance, that a knowledge of Latin and Greek is of less consequence to a young man who is to follow the business of a brewer, than a knowledge of chemistry and natural philosophy. Unfortunately, down almost to the present times, little or no attention has been paid to this arrangement; the consequence is, that science, comparatively speaking, is only beginning to bear upon the different branches of our manufactures, and bearing upon them not through the agency of an educated middle class, but through a self-instructed body of intelligent mechanics.

Having set his boys to a course of education conformable to their abilities and prospects, it behoves the father to make them aware of the important fact, that they will soon have to depend upon themselves. This can be told in many different ways, and enforced without having recourse to any thing like severity. There is a difference betwixt being firm and being harsh. Admonitions of this nature, to be of use, must be consistent with the whole tenor of a man's conduct. It will serve little purpose for a father to be profuse one day and sordid the next—to be at one time excessively lax in discipline, and at another time as much the reverse. A father should maintain the most friendly intercourse with his sons, should encourage them to seek his advice and direction, and try by all means to give them confidence in the opinions he delivers. He should also convince them that what he says, he will perform; for if they ever arrive at the conclusion that what he tells them about their depending on themselves is said merely to frighten them, then his case is pitiable indeed.

The class of fathers I am alluding to, very commonly fall into the serious and almost irretrievable error of being at one time over strict in the management of their sons, and at another far too indulgent. According to a popular phrase, "they allow them to get the better of them." If such be the case, the day is too surely lost. The misery which is endured by many heads of families, in consequence of the behaviour of their sons, may in most instances be traced to inconsistency of management, if not to systematic over-indulgence. They appear very ordinarily to act upon the principle that they cannot do enough for their families, particularly their sons—daughters being held in much less estimation, or overlooked in consequence of their generally unobtrusive behaviour. I, for one, cannot coincide in the idea that a father should necessarily ruin himself, or be compelled to resort to a mean style of living, merely to make his family fine ladies and gentlemen. One generation has no right to live upon the fruits of the industry of another. There is a reasonable boundary beyond which parental support ought not to be carried. If it proceed farther, an error is committed, and the foundation of an evil is laid, which will in time produce pain and humiliation. It is an incontrovertible truth that wealth to be enjoyed must be earned. Indeed, it is in the earning, not in the actual possession, that the pleasure lies. The man, therefore, who by his miscalculated indulgence confers wealth upon his children, deprives them of the only pleasure which wealth can give—the delight of overcoming difficulties to reach it. He may make them opulent, and if naturally temperate in their habits, they may experience a certain amount of happiness; but in general they would be much more happy by being left to struggle onward like their predecessors. It is at least certain, that by this process of self-dependence and exertion, their faculties, moral and intellectual, would be more highly sharpened, and their feelings of thankfulness more largely developed.

Fathers of families with sons approaching maturity cannot lay these things too seriously to heart. If, after a life of honest industry, they have attained that which will permit them to spend the remainder of their days in contented retirement, they will act with extreme injustice both towards themselves and the objects of their bounty, if they from time to time divest themselves of their means to satisfy the craving necessities of imprudent or petulant children. If they have placed their sons in a way of gaining a livelihood, as they themselves were obliged to gain it, they have done quite enough; and they will be wrong if they try to do more. Instances are far from uncommon in which fathers who had retired from business with small competencies were utterly ruined by attempting to prop up their sons in the various concerns in which they engaged. Often, under such circumstances, have they been compelled in their old age to begin the world anew, and spend the conclusion of their days with the bitter reflection, that, in bringing themselves into a state of misery, they had done no good whatever in their attempts to save their offspring from ultimate ruin.

Judging from the numerous melancholy instances

of this nature which have fallen under my own observation, I am of opinion that the misbehaviour and misfortunes of sons may generally be traced to the mismanagement of the parents. Having a few pounds to spare, they become possessed with the vain notion of making their sons gentlemen. Taking no warning from the splendid misery, so widely spread around them—regarding not the circumstance of thousands of individuals living but in name on professional pursuits—lawyers and divines, soldiers and physicians, with barely the means of subsistence—they recklessly adopt the means of adding their sons to the list. That many fathers of families who act in this manner are chargeable with the ruin of their children, there can be no doubt. Yet, after all, in reference to universal good, it is perhaps wrong to condemn this failing too severely. It acts most beneficially towards the humbler and less vain portion of the community. It clears the path to fortune for the sons of the poor. It leaves the extensive and lucrative departments of trade, commerce, and manufactures, to be freely occupied by individuals who might possibly find a difficulty in competing with persons of superior education and fortune. In accomplishing this end, it has the effect of producing a generalisation of wealth over the various classes of society—raises the poor to opulence, and reduces the opulent to poverty—brightens the prospects of the industrious artisan, and makes the heart of the widow in her lonely dwelling to sing for joy.

SCOTTISH COMIC SONGS,  
SUPPOSED TO BE HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED.  
NO. I.

## THE LASS'S WARDROBE.

[The whimsicality of this song will probably be enhanced by the consideration that it was written by an old unmarried lady, as a kind of burlesque of her own habits and history, and is frequently sung by herself with great glee. It has a peculiar air, resembling that of the well-known song entitled "The Laird of Cockpen."]

A lass lived down by yon burn-braes,  
And she was weel provided w' claes;  
She had three mutches, a' a' but twa,  
And nae bonny lad wad tak her awa.

Tak her awa, tak her awa,

Nae bonny lad wad tak her awa;

She had three mutches, a' a' but twa,

And nae bonny lad wad tak her awa.

She had a gown, it was just at the making,  
It wanted the forebreadth, it wanted the backing;  
It wanted the sleeves, the lining and a',  
And nae bonny lad wad tak her awa.

Tak her awa, &c.

She had twa stockings, they were at the knitting,  
They wanted the legs, they wanted the fitting;  
They wanted the heels, the heels, and a',  
And nae bonny lad wad tak her awa.

Tak her awa, &c.

She had a shawl, it was just like a riddle,  
It wadna been the waur o' the thread and the needle;  
For the middle was holed, and the border awa,  
And nae bonny lad wad tak her awa.

Tak her awa, &c.

She had a pouch to haud her siller,  
Wi' it she thoct to catch the miller;  
But she tint't the pouch, the siller, and a',  
And nae bonny lad wad tak her awa.

Tak her awa, &c.

She had a kist to haud her claes,  
It might hae se'd her a' her days;  
But, like a gowk, she gied it awa,  
And nae bonny lad wad tak her awa.

Tak her awa, &c.

Sae now she lives in a wee bit garret,  
Without a friend but a cat and a parrot;  
For her father is dead, and her mither, and a',  
And nae bonny lad has ta'en her awa.

Ta'en her awa, &c.

And what can she do but live her lane,  
Sin' a' her hopes o' marriage are gane;  
For she's auld, she's bald, she's wrinkled, and a',  
And nae bonny lad will tak her awa.

Tak her awa, &c.

Now listen, fair damsels, to my lays,  
Ye wha are vain about your claes;  
For if ye're no guid as weel as braw,  
O nae bonny lad will tak ye awa.

Tak ye awa, tak ye awa,

Nae bonny lad will tak ye awa,

If ye're no guid as weel as braw,

O nae bonny lad will tak ye awa.

\* Caps. † Lost.

The circumstance of our having always several numbers stereotyped in advance, has prevented us from sooner acknowledging the receipt of several most beneficent donations from London and elsewhere for behoof of the "Hero in Humble Life," noticed in our 171st number. These gifts have been accompanied with such expressions of kindly feeling, and exhibit so much genuine philanthropy, as to be worthy of specific notice at length, for the gratification of all who feel interested in rewarding merit of so deserving a nature. We shall, therefore, take an early opportunity of returning to the subject.

EDINBURGH: Published, weekly, by W. and R. CHAMBERS, 19, Waterloo Place; ORR & SMITH, Paternoster-row, London; and GEORGE YOUNG, Dublin. Agent in Glasgow, JOHN MACLEOD, 20, Argyle Street; and sold by all other Booksellers in Great Britain and Ireland.

Subscribers in town may have the paper left at their houses every Saturday morning, by giving their addresses at 19, Waterloo Place. Price of a quarter of twelve weeks, is. 6d.; of a half year of twenty-four weeks, 3s.; and of a year, 6s. 6d. In every case payable in advance.

From the Steam-Press of W. and R. CHAMBERS.